

PLATFORM 2



Issue 14

December 2018



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PLATFORM 2 is published by:
The Stourbridge Line User Group, 46 Sandringham Road, Wordsley, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY8 5HL

DUDLEY'S RAILWAYS

4. DUDLEY TO SWAN VILLAGE AND BIRMINGHAM by Roger Davis

The opening of the chord from Sedgeley Junction to Dudley Port High Level in 1854, to provide the London & North Western Railway (LNWR) with through services between Dudley and Birmingham, left the Great Western Railway (GWR) at a disadvantage as passengers had to travel either via Priestfield or via Stourbridge

Swan Village station. The Dudley line is on the left and the Wolverhampton line on the right.



Junction to change onto Birmingham bound services. In 1846 the GWR had undertaken not to expand from Dudley towards Birmingham but, in the early 1860s it gained an Act of Parliament to gain running powers over the LNWR from Dudley to a new junction about ½ mile east of Dudley Port Low Level at Horseley Heath, whence a new line would be constructed to the GWR main line from Birmingham Snow Hill to Wolverhampton at Swan Village. Swan

Village gained two extra platforms on the new line while an intermediate station was built at Great Bridge, closer to the town centre than the LNWR station. The new line opened in 1866 and reduced the mileage from Dudley to Birmingham Snow Hill to 9¼ miles. Although the line passed through Dudley Port Low Level, the GWR did not have the authority to stop there.

A second direct route from Dudley to Birmingham Snow Hill was opened by the GWR on 1 March 1878, operating via the Bumble Hole line and Old Hill and this line was described in *Platform 2* issue 5. Although the opening of this second line afforded the possibility of a Birmingham Snow Hill – Swan Village – Dudley – Old Hill - Birmingham Snow Hill circular service, this never happened.

Great Bridge (South) station



The 1895 Bradshaw's Timetable Guide shows the following level of service along the line.

MONDAY TO SATURDAY

Dudley	0803	0920	1035	1140	1310	1430	1605	1658	1835
Great Bridge	0810	0927	1042	1146	1317	1437	1612	1705	1842
Swan Village	0814	0931	1046	1150	1321	1441	1616	1709	1846
West Bromwich	0819	0937	1051	1154	1326	1446	1621	1714	1851
Handsworth	0824	0945	1056	✓	1331	1451	1626	1719	1856
Soho & Winson Green	0827	✓	1059	✓	1334	1454	1629	1722	✓
Hockley	0830	✓	1102	1201	1337	1458	1632	1725	✓
Birmingham Snow Hill	0835	0952	1107	1206	1342	1503	1637	1730	1901

MONDAY TO SATURDAY			
Dudley	2110	2305	
Great Bridge	2117	2312	
Swan Village	2121	2316	
West Bromwich	2126	2321	
Handsworth	2131	2326	
Soho & Winson Green	2134	▼	
Hockley	2137	2330	
Birmingham Snow Hill	2142	2335	

SUNDAY					
0935	1135	1442	1620	2020	2205
0942	1142	1449	1627	2027	2212
0946	1146	1453	1631	2031	2216
0951	1151	1458	1636	2036	2221
0956	1156	1503	1641	2041	2226
▼	1159	1506	1644	2044	2229
1000	1202	1509	1647	2050	2235
1005	1207	1514	1652	2055	2240

MONDAY TO SATURDAY									
Birmingham Snow Hill	0705	0855	1015	1100	1350	1500	1615	1735	1940
Hockley	0709	0859	1019	1104	1354	1504	1619	1739	1944
Soho & Winson Green	0712	0902	1022	▼	1357	▼	▼	1742	1947
Handsworth	0716	0907	1027	1109	1402	1510	1624	1746	1952
West Bromwich	0722	0912	1033	1114	1407	1515	1629	1751	1957
Swan Village	0726	0916	1037	1118	1411	1519	1633	1755	2001
Great Bridge	0733	0923	1043	1123	1416	1525	1638	1800	2006
Dudley	0742	0930	1050	1130	1423	1532	1645	1806	2013

MONDAY TO SATURDAY		
Birmingham Snow Hill	2030	2325
Hockley	2034	2329
Soho & Winson Green	2037	2332
Handsworth	2042	2337
West Bromwich	2047	2343
Swan Village	2051	2347
Great Bridge	2056	2352
Dudley	2103	2400

SUNDAY					
0800	1030	1355	1515	1900	2120
0804	1034	1359	1519	1904	2124
0807	1037	1402	1522	1907	2127
0812	1042	1407	1527	1912	2132
0817	1048	1412	1533	1918	2137
0821	1053	1416	1538	1923	2141
0826	1058	1422	1543	1928	2146
0833	1105	1430	1550	1935	2153

By 1922, the Monday to Saturday service remained largely the same with 13 trains from Dudley and 12 from Birmingham Snow Hill. However, Sunday services had been withdrawn. By 1932, the Monday to Saturday service had been drastically reduced with only 5 trains from Dudley (at 0703, 0727, 0905, 1300 and 1810) and 4 trains from Birmingham Snow Hill (at 1216, 1817, 1900 and 2301).

After the second World War, service levels were improved and Sunday services restored. The 1950 timetable shows 13 trains from Dudley and 12 from Birmingham Snow Hill on Mondays to Saturdays, with 6 in each direction on Sundays.

The same year saw Great Bridge station renamed to Great Bridge South to distinguish it from Great Bridge North station on the Walsall line.





Clockface hourly services, particularly at off-peak, were introduced in 1955 initially using ex-GWR “Flying Banana” railcars and later using first generation DMU railcars. From the late 1950s, a few services, mainly at peaks, stopped at Dudley Port Low Level and services at the station were improved from 1961 when nearly all services stopped there. By that time, 6 trains in each direction operated on Sundays, running non-stop between

Dudley and West Bromwich. However, by 1963, the service was cut back to run on Summer Sundays only – presumably for visits to Dudley Zoo. The final timetable operating from 9 September 1963 to 14 June 1964 was as follows :-

MONDAY TO SATURDAY

Dudley	0659	0726	0815	0900	1000	1100	1210	1300	1400
Dudley Port Low Level	▼	▼	0819	0905	1005	▼	1214	1305	1405
Great Bridge South	0706	0733	0821	0907	1007	1104	1217	1307	1407
Swan Village	0711	0738	0824	0910	1010	1108	1221	1310	1410
West Bromwich	0716	0742	0828	0914	1014	1112	1224	1314	1414
Handsworth & Smethwick	0721	0747	0832	0919	1019	1116	1228	1319	1419
Soho & Winson Green	0724	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Hockley	0731	0751	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Birmingham Snow Hill	0736	0754	0838	0925	1025	1122	1234	1325	1425

MONDAY TO SATURDAY

Dudley	1500	1600	1706	1800	1900	2000	2100	2200
Dudley Port Low Level	1505	1605	▼	1805	1905	2005	2105	2205
Great Bridge South	1507	1607	1713	1807	1907	2007	2107	2207
Swan Village	1510	1610	1716	1810	1910	2010	2110	2210
West Bromwich	1514	1614	1720	1814	1914	2014	2114	2214
Handsworth & Smethwick	1519	1619	1725	1819	1919	2019	2119	2219
Soho & Winson Green	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Hockley	▼	▼	1729	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Birmingham Snow Hill	1525	1625	1734	1826	1925	2025	2125	2225

SUNDAY (from 29 March 1964)

Dudley	1235	1400	1525	1700	1830	2010
Dudley Port Low Level	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Great Bridge South	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Swan Village	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
West Bromwich	1246	1411	1537	1711	1841	2021
Handsworth & Smethwick	1250	1415	1541	1715	1845	2025
Soho & Winson Green	1253	1418	1545	1718	1848	2028
Hockley	1256	1421	1547	1721	1851	2031
Birmingham Snow Hill	1259	1424	1550	1724	1854	2034

MONDAY TO SATURDAY					SO				
Birmingham Snow Hill	0737	0955	1055	1155	1215	1255	1355	1455	1555
Hockley	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Soho & Winson Green	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Handsworth & Smethwick	0743	1000	1100	1200	1221	1300	1400	1500	1600
West Bromwich	0749	1006	1106	1206	1226	1306	1406	1506	1606
Swan Village	0752	1010	1110	1210	1229	1310	1410	1510	1610
Great Bridge South	0755	1013	1113	1213	1233	1313	1413	1513	1613
Dudley Port Low Level	▼	1016	1116	1216	▼	1316	1416	1516	1616
Dudley	0800	1020	1120	1220	1239	1320	1420	1520	1620

MONDAY TO SATURDAY		SX						
Birmingham Snow Hill	1658	1737	1815	1908	1955	2055	2155	2255
Hockley	▼	1740	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Soho & Winson Green	▼	1743	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Handsworth & Smethwick	1703	1747	1822	1914	2000	2100	2200	2300
West Bromwich	1709	1752	1828	1919	2007	2106	2206	2306
Swan Village	1713	1755	1831	1923	2010	2110	2210	2310
Great Bridge South	1716	1758	1834	1926	2013	2113	2213	▼
Dudley Port Low Level	1719	▼	1837	1929	2016	2116	2216	2316
Dudley	1723	1803	1841	1933	2020	2120	2220	2320

MONDAY TO SATURDAY						
Birmingham Snow Hill	1145	1310	1445	1610	1745	1920
Hockley	1148	1313	1448	1613	1748	1923
Soho & Winson Green	1151	1316	1451	1616	1751	1926
Handsworth & Smethwick	1155	1320	1455	1620	1755	1930
West Bromwich	1200	1325	1500	1625	1800	1935
Swan Village	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Great Bridge South	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Dudley Port Low Level	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼	▼
Dudley	1210	1335	1510	1635	1810	1945

The service fell victim to the Beeching Report and was withdrawn on 15 June 1964, the same date as the line via Bumble Hole closed.

Today, even though Midland Metro line 1 passes through the site of Swan Village station, there is no sign that the station ever existed.

The route between Horseley Junction and Swan Village has disappeared, mainly under the A461 Great Bridge bypass (aptly named Great Western Way) and the A41 Black Country New Road. In this respect, Minister of Roads Transport Ernest Marples got his wish as the railway really was replaced by new road infrastructure.



NO LONGER STOPPING AT ... HANDSWORTH AND SMETHWICK

by John Warren

This is the third in a series of articles that looks at the stations between Birmingham Snow Hill and Worcester that have closed since 1960, working down the line from north to south.

HANDSWORTH & SMETHWICK

Handsworth and Smethwick station building



(Geoffrey Skelsey)

Date Opened

14 November 1854

Final Passenger Services on

4 March 1972

Number of Platforms

4

Number of Trains (1959)

130 (M-F), 134 (Sa), 76 (Su)

Number of Trains (1972)

21 (M-F), 16 (Sa), 0 (Su)

General view looking towards Snow Hill



(John Alsop)



Station Name : Handsworth and Smethwick (November 1854 - June 1965), Handsworth (June 1965 - March 1972)

Handsworth and Smethwick station was situated to the west of Booth Street in Handsworth. Entrance was via a courtyard that led up from Booth Street to the main station building situated on the north side of the station. The Midland Metro stop at Handsworth (Booth Street) partially occupies the site of the two platforms on the main line. This station was far more important than Hockley and Winson Green stations with many services from Snow Hill making this their first stop. The station's final hurrah came on 21 October 1990 when the down relief platform was used to pick up people walking the trackbed from Snow Hill. At that time, all platforms were intact, albeit without any buildings, but were swept away when the Jewellery Line was built. The original intention was to reopen Handsworth and Smethwick on the Jewellery Line, but this was shelved in favour of building a station to serve The Hawthorns just over ½ mile to the west, with the Metro stop provided instead.

IN FILLING by Rob Hebron

Those of you who keep a personal diary will have already filled a few pages by now. Time passes swiftly. Why not turn back those pages to the inner cover? There is a good chance you may find the traditional London Underground map. This iconic diagram depicts the best network of light railways in the British Isles. Not only is the map easy to use, so are the underground trains which serve all the major destinations in London and its suburbs. The London Underground system enables local and cross city journeys to be made directly or with minimum connections. It is the model for all urban transit planners to follow.



The London Underground is the legacy of the Victorians and Edwardians and largely financed by private enterprise. That is not to say that the New Elizabethans haven't improved the network and the Jubilee Line is the best example. Putting aside detours on escalators, the Tube offers an efficient alternative to road transport in a very congested city.

What is the relevance of the Tube to Birmingham and the West Midlands? The fact is that there is no similar system for the Second City or large neighbouring towns. Even if we were to overlay the West Midlands train network map on that of the principal bus companies there would not be the overall coverage required day and night to make reasonable journeys without inconvenience.



Light rail and heavy rail alongside each other at Birmingham Snow Hill.

The nearest equivalent in the West Midlands to the London Underground is the Midland Metro light rail system, (often incorrectly termed a "tram" line). The singular line is all that exists because effectively, extensions have been (or will be) linear. Until Metro Line Two is operational in 2023, there is no network. What happens then? It appears that Birmingham will be the axis and future extensions will be to Digbeth, Birmingham Airport and Edgbaston. I am not criticising the importance of these destinations but elsewhere, such as Halesowen, there are no plans for Metro stations.

In the mix (or mess!) comes a new proposition to provide in-filling. This is called the “Sprint Bus”, not dissimilar to the “Bendy Bus” which has been rejected by Londoners. West Midlands Combined Authority is promoting Sprint as the magic solution to congestion but it is not without its own problems: Sprint requires road priority measures and elsewhere in the country, bus lanes have been either misused or removed altogether. The short term fix is not the long term solution.



Despite the vandalism of Dr. Richard Beeching, track beds of suburban railways still survive. Some of the Stourbridge Line railway stations could easily be plugged into Midland Metro, way down the line from The Hawthorns or Jewellery Quarter. Granted there has been some redevelopment of railway land but Metro is capable of street-running where a diversion is required.

My point is that we will never have a West Midlands Underground system due to the geology of the area and numerous abandoned mine shafts, dating back to the Industrial revolution. However, a West Midlands Overground is perfectly possible, building on the West Midlands railways. We cannot deny that Birmingham is a magnet for employment nor can we ignore the logistical findings of the “Movement for Growth” strategy. Instead, I believe that our Councillors should reconsider the modes of transport assigned to specific corridors. A little in-filling is required before progressing to the Metro extensions from Birmingham or Wolverhampton. The spider’s web is strongest at its centre.

The views of the author are from a personal perspective and are not necessarily those of SLUG officers.

ALL CHANGE AT ... LANGLEY GREEN
The changing scene at one of the Stourbridge line stations



THE OTHER STOURBRIDGE LINE

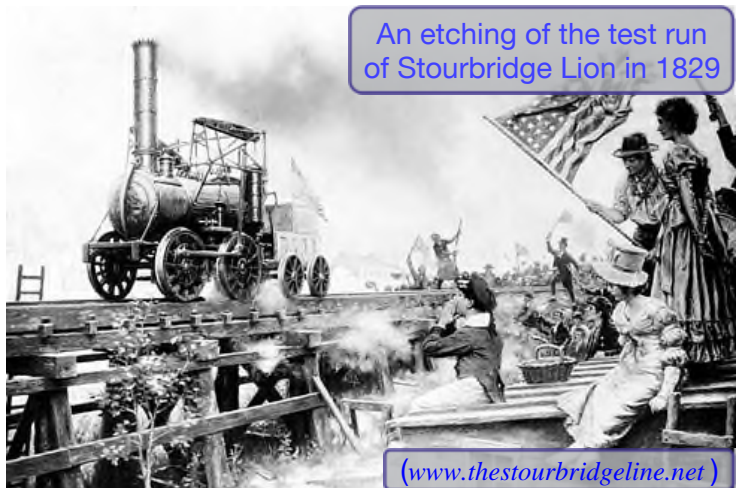
by Roger Davis



The town of Honesdale, Pennsylvania (population 4,480) is situated 106 miles from New York City and 3,376 miles from the town of Stourbridge, West Midlands. It is known as the Birthplace of America's Commercial Railroad and is now the headquarters of a tourist railway that operates over 25 miles of track from Honesdale to Lackawaxen, Pennsylvania along the valley of the Lackawaxen River.

This line is known as the Stourbridge Line despite its obvious remoteness from the town of the same name, and this is due to its original steam locomotive. The

Stourbridge Lion was manufactured in Bradley Road, Stourbridge by the firm Foster, Rastrick and Company in 1829. It was obtained by the Delaware & Hudson Canal Company, shipped in parts to New York in May 1829 and assembled at the West Point Foundry. It arrived in Honesdale in July 1829 for testing on the company's newly built track of about 3 miles. The locomotive performed well in its first test run on 8 August 1829, despite the scepticism of the huge crowd who witnessed the event in the expectation that anybody foolhardy to ride the contraption would surely meet their doom, but its 7.5 tons weight was found to be far too heavy for a line designed to carry 4 tons. Therefore, it was never used for its intended purpose of hauling coal wagons and, over the coming decades, a number of parts were removed from the abandoned locomotive until only the boiler and a few other components remained. These were acquired by the Smithsonian Institution in 1890 and are currently on display at the B&O Railroad Museum in Baltimore.



In 1932, the Delaware & Hudson built its own replica of the *Stourbridge Lion* from plans that were made based on the parts remaining in existence, and this replica is now on display at the Wayne County Historical Society Museum. This museum is in a small brick building on Main Street, Honesdale, Pennsylvania, which was once the D&H Canal's company office, and is where the *Stourbridge Lion* began its inaugural run.

The full line from Honesdale to Lackawaxen was completed in 1868 and was used primarily for coal traffic. Although coal traffic declined in the 1930s, new local business took its place, warranting a five-day-a-week operation. In 1960, a merger saw the line transfer to the Erie Lackawanna Railroad, which unfortunately filed for bankruptcy on 26 June 1972, after Hurricane Agnes had caused damage amounting to \$2 million to another part of its network. To avoid abandonment of the line, Wayne County made plans to purchase the line, and in 1979 launched seasonal passenger excursions.

However, after a number of setbacks which included the destruction of a bridge by flood water in 2005, it was announced in December 2011 that the excursion services had ceased indefinitely.

Service was resumed by the Delaware Lackawaxen & Stourbridge Railroad Company on 9 May 2015, marketed as the Stourbridge line. The following is its mission statement as posted on its website at <https://www.thestourbridgeline.net/home.html>.

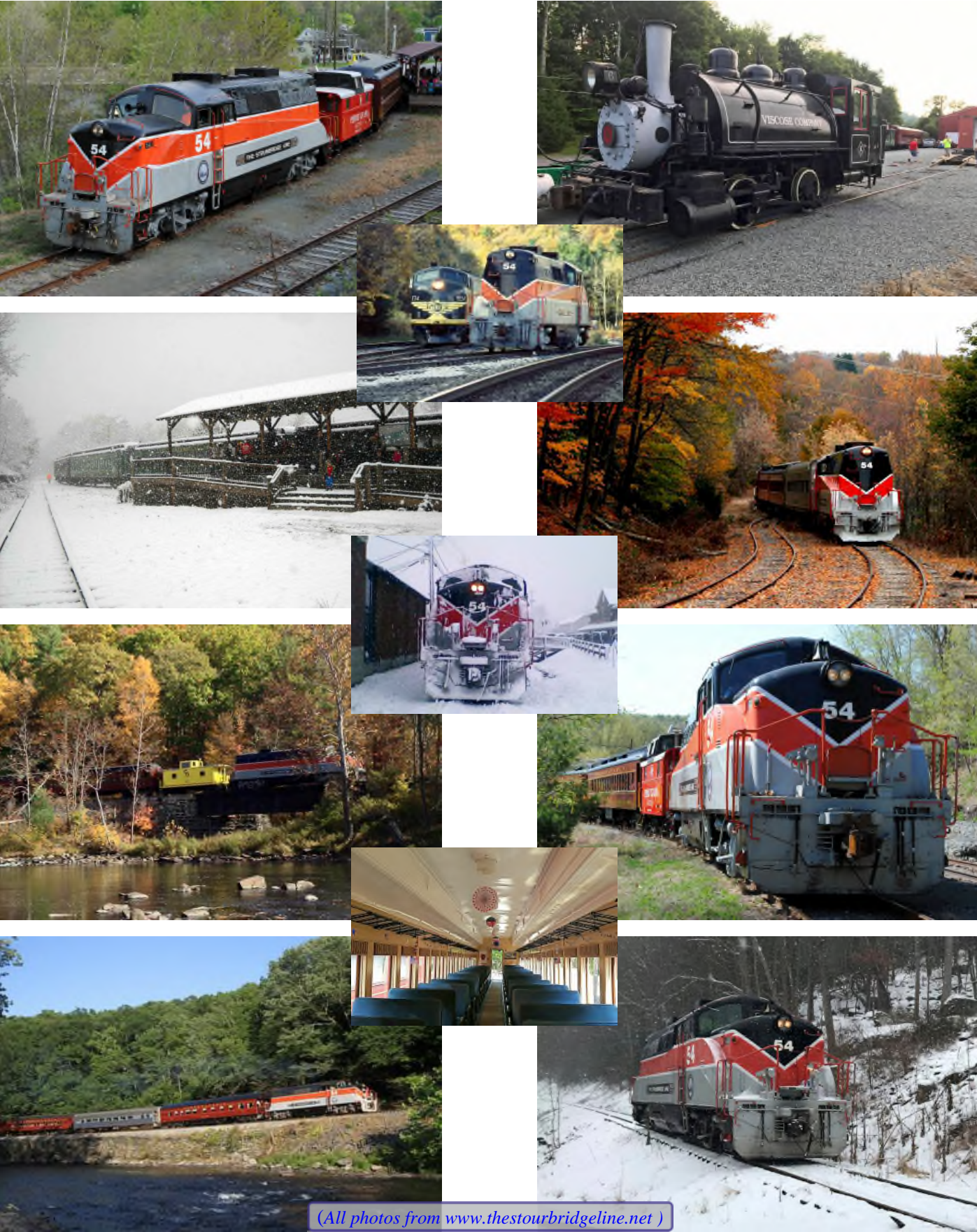
The Stourbridge Line is operated by the Delaware Lackawaxen & Stourbridge Railroad Company (DL&S), offering a seasonal schedule with limited weekday & weekend service as well as community related event trains from President's Day through the Fall Foliage Season. Enjoy twenty five miles of historic railroad winding through Northeastern Pennsylvania along the Lackawaxen River Valley. Experience the history & beauty of this ride on The Stourbridge Line.



So, if you are ever in the area and want to compare this Stourbridge Line with the real one, you know where to go. You never know, they might even they have their own Stourbridge Line User Group!

THE OTHER STOURBRIDGE LINE ... IN PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photographs are taken from the Stourbridge Line website. As can be seen from these photos, the US line is nowhere near as picturesque as the section of our own Stourbridge line through Handsworth, Smethwick and Langley Green.



(All photos from www.thestourbridgeline.net)

HAVE I GOT OLD NEWS QUIZ FOR YOU

Below are four photographs showing incidents that have disrupted Stourbridge line services in this century. Can you remember the location of each incident, and when the incident happened?



A FAMOUS VISITOR by John Warren

Stourbridge shed had a famous visitor in late 1962 when the last steam locomotive built by British Railways, *92220 Evening Star*, was photographed on shed. The actual date is unknown but it is thought that it was after the engine moved to Cardiff Canton shed in September after a stint on express services on the Somerset & Dorset Railway between Bath Green park and Bournemouth West which culminated when it operated the last-ever Pines Express over the line on 8 September.



WHERE ARE WE ? - No 2 ANSWERS

Here are the answers to Where Are We? No 2 which featured in the previous issue.

1 - Approaching Worcester Shrub Hill, 2 - Approaching Rowley Regis, 3 - Approaching Kidderminster, 4 - Approaching Lye, 5 - North of Worcester Shrub Hill, 6 - Between Rowley Regis and Langley Green,